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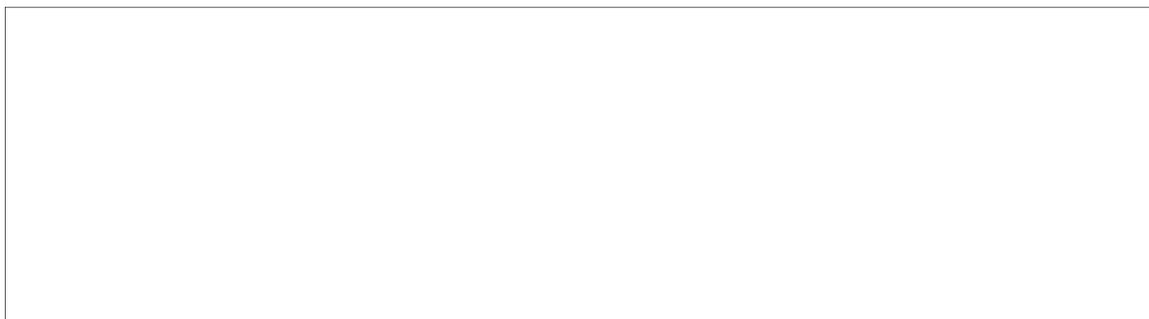
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PLO-UN

The Arab resolution at the UN General Assembly reaffirming the "rights" of the Palestinians was softened slightly at the last minute as part of an Arab effort to win European backing. The Arabs, hoping for an overwhelming majority, took this step out of apprehension that a resolution passed only by Communist and nonaligned votes would prove an embarrassment rather than a victory. The vote was 89 to 10 with 37 abstentions.

The resolution, as approved, omits earlier references to a Palestinian "homeland" and to Palestinians who lost their homes and property "since 1947." These formulations had been interpreted by the Europeans as implicitly denying Israel's right to exist, and were therefore considered unacceptable.

The Europeans were disturbed at the resolution's failure to mention Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which affirm Israel's right to exist and provide the legal basis for the Geneva peace talks. Despite the strong feelings of some EC members, notably the British and Germans, that the one-sided resolution demanded a negative vote, the EC countries managed to preserve the common position of abstention that had been agreed to earlier in the week.

Egyptian and Syrian UN delegates reportedly attempted but failed to persuade PLO representatives to accept some reference to the Security Council resolutions. The Egyptian representative, seeking European support, suggested earlier this week that it is "too much at this time" to ask the PLO to accept affirmation of Israel's right to exist.

Israel, predictably, remains opposed to the Palestine resolution even in its modified form. Israeli UN representative Tekoah warned delegates of the EC states on Thursday that no amendment could alter the resolution's "fundamentally sinister nature." He charged that the resolution, although couched in "civilized" terms, reveals that the PLO continues to seek the annihilation of Israel.

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The assembly adopted a second resolution which gives the PLO observer status at the UN and all UN-sponsored conferences. The vote on this resolution was 95 to 17 with 19 abstentions. On this issue the French, by abstaining, broke ranks with their EC partners, who voted against the resolution. The French will probably maintain that their vote on this resolution was not covered by an agreement among the Nine, and it was the least gesture Paris could make toward warding off possible Arab criticism that the French did not favor the resolution on the rights of the Palestinians.

The vote granting the PLO observer status represents another first in a debate that has been characterized throughout by its departure from orthodox UN procedures. The Secretary General himself traditionally has granted organizations and governments observer status--with later endorsement by the full General Assembly--provided they already have membership in a UN specialized agency. The PLO is not a member of any UN agency, and the assembly's action in granting it observer status merely through a majority vote could open the floodgate to a rush of similar requests by other, principally African, liberation movements desiring this patina of international legitimacy.

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PORTUGAL

Preparations for the constituent assembly elections in March are proceeding on schedule amid signs that Portugal's only viable conservative party, the moderate Social Democratic Center (CDS), may be excluded from a role in monitoring voter registration.

Registration is expected to begin during the first week of December. The process will be supervised on the precinct level by five-man commissions composed of members who are "representative of groups and political currents, as well as independents who identify with the program of the Armed Forces Movement."

In a meeting in Lisbon called to discuss candidates for the registration commissions, leftists recommended that the commissions include one representative each from the Communist, Socialist, and Popular Democratic parties, as well as the Communist-dominated Portuguese Democratic Movement. The fifth representative would be an independent. This recommendation is not binding on the president of the municipality who selects the commissions, but in the absence of further guidance, it may set a precedent in Lisbon that would be picked up elsewhere in the country.

Aside from excluding a conservative voice, while giving the Communists two votes in voter registration disputes, there is another advantage in this plan for the Communists. They will use the absence of the CDS on these commissions as evidence that the country has concluded that the CDS does not "identify" with the Armed Forces Movement's program and that it is not a "representative" party.

The measure of success this plan has outside of Lisbon will be the first test of Communist strength in the newly formed municipal governments that were installed after the Caetano regime fell. It has been widely rumored that Communist and other leftist-oriented groups have had considerable success placing their own people in these posts.

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Meanwhile, the Council of State will meet on November 26 to consider a law that deals with those ineligible to vote for having participated actively in the Salazar and Caetano regimes. Some 2,000 persons are expected to be included in this category. [redacted]

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KOREA

Conflicting resolutions on Korea are scheduled for debate early next week in the UN's Political Committee, but both have a good chance of passing.

North Korea's friends are pressing for a resolution that calls for withdrawal of "all foreign troops stationed in South Korea under the flag of the United Nations." The US and other friends of South Korea have countered with a resolution advocating Security Council consideration of the entire issue of Korean peacekeeping, with the focus on negotiating a new arrangement before any move to terminate the UN military role in the peninsula.

At the moment, the resolution favorable to the South Koreans seems likely to pass by a safe margin. The "hostile" resolution may also pass, although by fewer votes. If both pass, the UN will have failed for the first time since 1950 to speak with a clear voice on the Korean issue. [redacted]

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CAMBODIA

The UN General Assembly will apparently begin debate on the Cambodian representation issue on Monday, and a vote could come later in the week.

Beginning the Cambodian deliberations on Monday would be a break in tradition, in that two important regional issues would be debated simultaneously--the Cambodian question on the assembly floor and the Korean issue in the Political Committee--but assembly President Bouteflika and Sihanouk's backers will apparently insist on doing this. They also will probably push for an early vote on Cambodia, hoping to capitalize on momentum among the nonaligned members as a result of assembly action on South Africa and the victory of the Arab resolution on Palestine.

Phnom Penh's supporters have been anticipating such stage-managing by the other side and are rushing their lobbying campaign to completion. Cambodian Prime Minister Long Boret is scheduled to arrive in New York over the weekend to lend prestige to his side's representation. Going down to the wire, it still appears that the crucial vote on priority for the Asian-initiated counterresolution, which would again defer UN action on Cambodia, will be extremely close. Much will depend on how a number of wavering Middle East states vote. In the end, some fluke--an unexpected absence or a miscast vote such as Norway's last year--could decide the issue.

The US mission at the UN has reported rumors that an effort may be made to invite Sihanouk to participate in the debate. Although Sihanouk may come to the UN if his side wins, it seems unlikely that he will appear before a final vote. He is in Peking, and there are as yet no indications he is preparing to leave. The UN would have to extend a formal invitation to Sihanouk, and it is probably apparent to his supporters that time-consuming deliberations on this issue would undercut their drive for an early vote on Cambodia.

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TURKEY

Turkish political leaders are apparently having second thoughts about the viability of the proposed non-partisan government. As concern mounts that the new government is undemocratic and unconstitutional and differences over the timing of new elections intensify, Prime Minister-designate Irmak's chances of receiving a parliamentary vote of confidence seem to be receding.

Irmak will present his program to parliament tomorrow, with a confidence vote expected to follow by November 29. Two small rightist parties--the Democratic Party and former prime minister Ecevit's old coalition partner, the National Salvation Party--have already announced that they will vote against Irmak. The two largest parties--Ecevit's Republican People's Party and the Justice Party--have reserved a decision until they see Irmak's program, specifically its provisions for early elections. Ecevit insists on a firm call for elections next spring, while Justice Party leader Demirel seems equally adamant about putting them off for as long as possible.

The question of when to hold new elections is primarily responsible for the political stalemate, which is now entering its third month. Most politicians still believe that Ecevit would capitalize on his Cyprus successes to sweep to victory if elections were held soon. There is a growing awareness, however, that something must be done to form a government strong enough to deal with Turkey's urgent problems, particularly now that Ankara faces a strengthened Karamanlis government in Greece.

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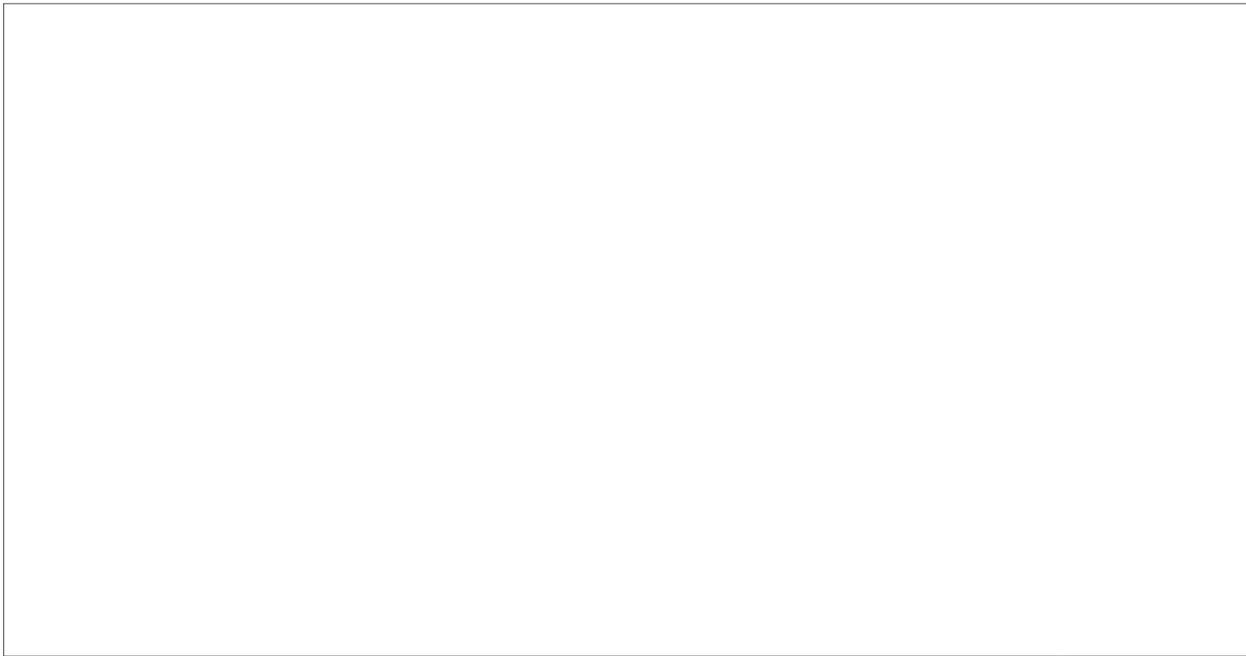


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FOR THE RECORD

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USSR: A Soviet E-I-class nuclear-powered attack submarine has been sighted in the South China Sea, apparently heading for the Indian Ocean. If the boat continues on course, this will mark the first deployment of its class in the Indian Ocean, and only the second in that area by a Soviet nuclear attack submarine. Once in the Indian Ocean, it could submerge and conduct independent operations against the USS Constellation task group. It had been thought that a cruise-missile submarine would accompany the Sverdlov light cruiser presently operating there.

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Australia: Prime Minister Whitlam has announced that leftist Deputy Prime Minister Cairns will drop his foreign trade post and take over the treasury next month. The shift puts an official stamp on Cairns' domination of economic policy, but is unlikely to bring any major policy changes. Whitlam expects that Cairns will be a more effective treasurer than his predecessor, but the change could weaken Cairns' political standing by forcing him to make unpopular decisions to deal with Australia's sagging economy.

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